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23

Further Papers relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey.

Part III.

No. 1.

Consul Holmes to Lord J. Russell.—(*Received November* 23.)

(No. 74.)

My Lord, *Bosna Serai, November* 7, 1860.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Hammond's despatch No. 11 of the 6th October, referring to my despatch No. 50 of the 28th August, regarding the disturbances which had taken place in the Herzegovine, and the proceedings of Ali Riza Pasha on that occasion, and instructing me to furnish your Lordship with further information on the subject.

I have now the honour to inclose copies of Mr. Vice-Consul Zohrab's despatch to me, dated the 2nd instant, transmitting his report and his inclosures on the affairs above alluded to, which he had been specially charged to investigate.

Your Lordship will perceive from these papers that, if the Turks appear by oppression and incapacity to govern to have brought the Herzegovine to a state of rebellion and ruin, at all events the atrocities ascribed to them have been almost entirely the inventions of those who are interested in representing Turkey to the world in the worst possible light.

An incident which occurred at Mostar just before Mr. Zohrab started for Gasko will show how entirely the people look to Russia for inspiration as to what they shall say, or how they shall act. M. Moreau, the Chancelier of the French Consulate here, who went to Gasko at the same time as Mr. Zohrab, happened to be paying a visit to the Russian Consul at Mostar, when a peasant was introduced, who not knowing who M. Moreau was, or that he spoke the Slave language, told the Consul that the Christians of Gasko having heard that English and French agents were about to visit that district to inquire into the late affairs, had sent him to the Russian Consulate to ask what they were to say.

I need make no other remarks on the inclosed report than that, having personally visited the churches and villages in question, which neither the Russian Consul nor Zekee Bey attempted to do, Mr. Zohrab's statement of what has occurred, may be considered to be as correct as possible.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. R. HOLMES.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Vice-Consul Zohrab to Mr. Holmes.

Sir, *Bosna Serai, November* 2, 1860.

IN obedience to the instructions contained in your despatch No. 1, I proceeded to Gasko on the 17th October, to inquire into the correctness of

certain reports of massacres and profanation of churches said to to have been perpetrated there by the Turkish troops.

I beg to inclose my report on these events.

In this report I have endeavoured to give a precise account of what happened during the past summer as related by the Christians and by the Turks. My conclusions are drawn from the investigations I made on the theatre of these events, and from a cross-examination of many of the persons interested.

My visit to the district of Gasko was preceded by Colonel Zekee Bey, Aide-de-camp to His Highness the Grand Vizier, and by M. Bezobrazoff, the Russian Consul at Mostar; both these officers went thither with the same object as myself.

Zekee Bey did not go beyond Metokhia, the head-quarters of the expeditionary force. His investigation extended only to the examination of a few Christians, and though, from what I heard, he appears to have given the Christians every facility to come and state their grievances to him, while he showed himself very reserved, and even hostile, to the Turks; yet from what he stated to me, he seemed possessed of very superficial, but not incorrect, information regarding events at Gasko. He states, however, that fifteen Christians lost their lives in the burnt villages; this is incorrect: he appears to confuse the entire number of Christians who lost their lives from various causes during the whole season, with the seven who were killed in the attack of Ali Riza Pasha.

M. Bezobrazoff inspected the pillaged chapels, but not the burnt villages. In his second report on these events, he gives, I am told, a tolerably correct account. In his first report to his Government he stated the victims of Ali Pasha's attack to have been about 150, and the houses burnt at more than double the number the villages contained. The pillage of the chapels is viewed by him as entirely the work of the Turks, and, on this point he is, I believe, bitter against them.

The Consul of Austria at Mostar did not go at all to Gasko; he was guided in his report by the intelligence brought to Mostar, and by the information afforded him by M. Bezobrazoff.

M. Moreau, Chancelier of the French Consulate of Bosna Seraï, also proceeded to Gasko with the same object as myself; he came to the same conclusions as myself; and his report agrees in every respect with mine.

The Christians of the district of Gasko, in common with the Christians of all the other districts of the Herzegovina, had much to complain of, both against the Government and against their fellow Mussulman subjects; their grievances were known to the Government, but a deaf ear was turned to them, even after the repeated warnings which were given by the successful revolts of Bagnani, Zupzi, Piva, &c.

These districts were forced into revolt by the negligence of the Government in not investigating their complaints, and rendering prompt justice where justice was urgently called for. Promises were made only to be immediately broken; the causes of complaint continued in full vigour, and at length the people were driven to despair, and preferring death to a life of misery and servitude, rebelled. Grahovo was the first to set an example; it was followed by the districts of Zupzi and Piva in 1858, by Bagnani in 1859, by Drobniak in 1859, and by Gasko this year.

In spite of all these indications of the utter ruin which follows the present mode of administering the Government of the Herzegovina, the Porte still continues the same system in those districts which are yet loyal. It is only when a district rises in rebellion that the Porte volunteers concessions and promulgates reforms, and what is worse, shows her weakness by becoming a suppliant; a premium is thus set on rebellion: the loyal districts see their rebel neighbours not only emancipated from all oppression but respected and petted by the Government, while they continue uncared for and oppressed. What inducements have they, then, to remain loyal?

It is not merely by a change of Governors, or other functionaries, that the evil can be got over; indeed, I think a change of the higher functionaries at this moment would be prejudicial, as long residence in the Herzegovina has made them well acquainted with the people and their wants. It is an immediate and entire reform in the mode of carrying on the Government, and of administering justice, that is loudly called for, and if these are not speedily looked to, the

Herzegovina will, in a short time, require a very large military force to hold it, or will have to be given up entirely by Turkey.

As regards the districts in rebellion, energetic steps should be taken in the spring to reduce them. The system hitherto adopted of treating with the insurgents while they held arms in their hands, has been most unfortunate; it has not brought about the desired result, it has exalted them in their own eyes, while the prestige of the troops has been completely destroyed, and they are looked upon, even by the Mussulmans, as incapable of opposing the insurgents. At present the rebels beard the Turks, and dare them to advance; insolent letters are frequently written by their leaders to the military commanders. To show the style generally adopted in these epistles, I beg to inclose copy of one sent by Novitza Pavich, a Montenegrin Senator, who appears to be the leader of the insurgents of Piva, to Dervish Pasha, a short time since.

Dervish Pasha expresses himself both ready and capable of crushing the rebellion with the troops now under his orders, but he requires the necessary authority to do so from Constantinople, and funds to enable him to carry on his operations. Should, however, Montenegro still persist in protecting and assisting the insurgents against their Sovereign, operations on a larger scale will have to be adopted. It remains, therefore, to be decided whether the recovery of the rebel districts is worth the blood and treasure which would be shed in engaging in hostilities against Montenegro, if the Montenegrins cannot be compelled to remain within their own frontiers.

I beg also to inclose copies of two letters written to Dervish Pasha by the Secretary of Prince Nicolas of Montenegro, and by M. Hecquard, the French Consul at Scutari.

The first of these documents is a request that the rebel subjects of the Sultan in the district of Piva may not be attacked; the second, that they may not be called on to pay all their taxes. The one states that, if attacked, they will take refuge in Montenegro; the other, that, if they are taxed, they will appeal to arms. Neither document, I think, requires any comment.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JAS. ZOHRAB.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Report.

THE three Christian villages which it was stated in the papers had been given to the flames, and whose inhabitants had been mercilessly butchered by order of Livah Ali Riza Pasha, lie in three ravines running parallel to and near each other in a spur of very rocky hills about seven miles to the north of Metokhia, the seat of the Government of Gasko, and close on to the frontier of the rebel district of Piva. They are inhabited entirely by Christians of the Greek Church. The lands and houses are the property principally of Mussulmans, by whom they are rented to the Christians for a fixed instead of a fluctuating rent, *i.e.*, instead of paying the "utch-limeh" (one-third of the produce), a fixed amount is agreed upon to be paid yearly regardless of the success or failure of the crops. This arrangement is considered just by the rent-payers themselves.

In the following Table the names of these villages, with the number of houses in each, and the houses taxed, is given:—

Name of Village.	Number of Houses Registered for Taxation.	Actual number of Houses.
Berouchitzi	8	15
Yassenik	14	24
Jenitévitzi	16	19
Total	38	58

These villages are small and scattered: the houses are ill-built, each one consisting of four unhewn stone walls roughly put together without lime, and covered with a thatching of rushes. They consist of, with rare exceptions, one chamber each, which has neither flooring nor ceiling.

I have entered into these details to show that if the Christians as rebels merited the punishment of having their houses burnt, their loss has not been heavy, and only extends to the mere time required for re-roofing their dwellings.

I had considerable difficulty in finding a person to guide me to these villages, though I offered to pay handsomely for the service. After much loss of time I succeeded in inducing a Christian to guide me to the nearest of them, and I was then guided by the inhabitants to the others. I thus visited the three villages, and collecting the principal people, obtained their version of the raid made on them by Livah Ali Riza Pasha. The following is a résumé of their relation.

They stated that the oppressions to which they had been subjected by the Bashi-Bozouks, Zaptiehs, the local authorities, and the Mussulmans of Gasko and Nicksich had at length become insupportable, and seeing that the Central Government turned a deaf ear to their cries, they, together with the inhabitants of several other villages, deserted their homes in June last, and took refuge in the hills, where they considered themselves secure from Moslem oppression. They, however, soon returned again to their villages, having received an invitation from the authorities to do so, coupled with the assurance that they would meet with justice and kind treatment. They resumed their agricultural occupations, and were congratulating themselves on their happy escape from tyranny, when one afternoon, in the early part of July, they were surprised by seeing the Turkish troops crowning the heights around their villages, while a party of Bashi-Bozouks advanced and attacked Berouchitzi, and, entering that village, commenced pillaging; no blood was shed. They assert, however, that six individuals named Stevan, Ivan, Lucca, Ilia, Stepan, and another, all sons of Simon Gregorovich, were conducted to the presence of Ali Riza Pasha, under promise that they should not be molested, but that the promise was broken, and the five first-named executed. The sixth succeeded in making his escape. Lazar, a seventh son of Simon Gregorovich, was induced to quit his father's house by a certain Murad Aga Ariovich, of Nicksich, who pledged his word that he would be safe. He was brought to Metokhia, where, after being tortured, he was put to death.

Simon Gregorovich owed his life to the efforts of a Nizam officer, who rescued him from the Bashi-Bazouks.

The inhabitants of Yassenik had sufficient time to escape with a portion of their property. The two best houses in this village were spared, some said, to the entreaties of their owners, two widows, while others said through the energy shown by these women in defending them.

At Jeniévitzi the Christians state two women were murdered, and their bodies thrown into the flames. The houses were all burnt, but the inhabitants having escaped with their cattle and flocks, no further damage was done.

In the following Table a list of the losses experienced by these villages is given, drawn up from their own statement:—

Name of Village.	Houses burnt.	Stables and Stores burnt.	Mills burnt.	Lives lost.	Sheep taken.	Cattle taken.	Horses taken.	Remarks.
Berouchitzi	13	14	1	5	1,435	188	1	One more life lost, as stated above; the man was executed at Metokhia.
Jeniévitzi	16	21	..	2	..	..	..	
Yassenik .. .	13	18	2	..	635	41	9	
Total ..	42	53	3	7	2,070	229	10	

I asked the people of Yassenik whether they had not given cause for this attack. They replied that none of the villages had given cause for complaint;

they paid their taxes, and obeyed and still wished to obey the orders of the Government: that though they had joined other villages in placing look-outs on the hills, their object in so doing was not to resist the Government, but to have timely warning of the approach of Bashi-Bozouks and "leskeks" (robbers), whose advent was invariably followed by ill-treatment and loss.

The Turks are accused in this statement of having barbarously murdered two women in one village, while in the next village, and immediately afterwards, they are stated to have generously spared two houses to the entreaties of two other women. The Christians also deny having resisted the Turks in the least, yet they assert that the Turks were obliged to employ subterfuge to induce them to present themselves before Ali Riza Pasha. Here the question naturally presents itself, why employ deception, unless resistance had to be overcome?

I shall now give Dervish Pasha's relation of the causes, object, and result of the attack on these villages. This statement, I should add, was confirmed by several officers and others with whom I conversed at Mostar, Nevessin, and Gasko.

Early in the spring of this year, the inhabitants of the following villages, Yassenik, Lipnik, Garevo, Kazantzi, Doulichi, Vralkovich, Golia, Kristatz, Berouchitzi, Danitzi, Jeniévitzi, &c., revolted, and, with the aid of bands of Uskoks and Montenegrins, attacked the Pilanka of Kristatz, a block-house situated at an important point on the road between Gasko and Nicksich, carried and burnt it. Having thus rendered themselves masters of a portion of the country, the rebels commenced pillaging the Mussulman villages of Gasko, and making raids into the district of Stolatz; they also obliged many other Christians, who otherwise would have remained quiet, to join the revolt, and, to destroy all chance of the people returning to their homes, the houses of all who had shown reluctance to join the insurgents were fired.

The district of Gasko was thus reduced in a few days to a state of deplorable anarchy and danger.

Dervish Pasha, who was at Mostar, dispatched without delay Livah Ali Riza Pasha with a considerable force to retake and hold the Pilanka of Kristatz. This was accomplished without a shot being fired. Ali Riza Pasha, instead of proceeding against the rebels, advised them to return to their homes quietly, and to send deputies to Mostar to state their grievances, and leaving a garrison in Kristatz, Ali Riza Pasha retired. This invitation was acceded to by many, and a deputation was formed headed by a priest named Pop Bogdan, a man who had been one of the chief movers in the revolt. This deputation was met and detained at Nevessin by Dervish Pasha. Instead, however, of complaints, pleadings to be pardoned, and to be permitted to live tranquilly in their villages, were made by the deputation.

The deputation gave in writing a declaration stating the cause and objects of the revolt. This declaration they confirmed later before the Medjliss at Mostar. I inclose a copy of it.

While the Deputation was at Nevessin, the following villages, Liprik, Samabor, Yassenik, Jeniévitzi, and Berouchitzi, again revolted, and cut off the communications between Gasko, Kristatz, and Nicksich, and placed pandoors (guards) along a pretended line of frontier, beyond which they said no Turk should pass.

Dervish Pasha on hearing this, called upon the Deputation to explain the cause of this strange movement. The reply was, that the Christians acted through fear; that this feeling was taken advantage of by a few evil-disposed persons for their own purposes. Pop Bogdan, however, undertook to pacify and to induce them to submit; a letter to that purport was written by him, but it did not produce the desired effect; the disorder increased; seven soldiers were murdered while cutting fuel in a forest about four miles from the camp at Metokhia. Ali Riza Pasha's Aide-de-camp, and five soldiers, were cut to pieces on the road between Metokhia and Kristatz, and several Mussulmans met a similar fate. The Turks, however, still hesitated to act with severity. The Deputation was invited to make a last appeal to the rebel villages; this was done, but the letter, instead of having the desired effect, seemed to enrage the people. After perusal, it was torn and trodden under foot by the Chiefs of the rebels. This event brought to light the real intentions of the rebels; it became evident that the contest was not one for rights and justice, but for entire emancipation. It had been arranged between the rebels and their deputies that all

letters written by the latter to the former should bear a secret mark, to indicate their authenticity, and that they were voluntarily written, but that the absence of such a mark was to show that such letters had been written through compulsion. The letters written from Mostar by the deputies were not so marked, and they consequently had an effect very different from that anticipated by the authorities.

On this discovery being made, the deputies were imprisoned, and energetic measures were decided on. Ali Riza Pasha was directed to attack and punish the rebels. He advanced, and summoned the rebels to surrender. They replied by firing on his advanced guard; the attack then commenced. The three villages, Jenićvitzi, Yassenik, and Berouchitzi, were carried and burnt, and all the cattle and sheep left by the inhabitants were taken by the troops. In this attack five rebels and two women were killed in action, and several prisoners made. On the side of the Turks, two men were wounded.

Ali Riza Pasha's advance on these villages appears to have been a very ill-conducted affair, and has been severely commented upon by Dervish Pasha. Ali Riza Pasha quitted his position in the afternoon; he reached the villages at nightfall, and after firing them, had to make a precipitate retreat, which rather resembled flight; and had the rebels possessed a skilful leader, they could easily have inflicted a very heavy loss on Ali Riza Pasha.

At Berouchitzi two bayonets were found: one of these was recognized as having belonged to one of the soldiers murdered while out wood-cutting.

The prisoners taken were a short time after released, but one, it appears, died in prison.

An offer to restore the property of the murdered Aide-de-camp was made by these villages, provided the value set on it was first remitted. A list with the price of each article was even sent to Ali Riza Pasha.

Dervish Pasha concluded his statement by observing that it was remarkable that, while deaths of seven Christians had been so severely commented upon in the European papers, and had brought so much obloquy on the Turks, the murder of thirty-seven Mussulmans, during the same period and in the same district, had not received even a casual notice.

There is considerable discrepancy between these two statements; my observations, however, lead me to place faith in the Turkish version, and to reject that of the Christians.

It is a fact, though persons interested deny it, that the Christians of Gasko revolted in the early part of the last spring; that they then murdered several Mussulman agas (landlords); that they interrupted the communications between Gasko and Nicksich, and Gasko and Mostar; that they joined the Montenegrins and Uskoks in murdering and pillaging Mussulmans, and Christians who did not join them; that they assisted in carrying off upwards of 9,000 head of cattle and sheep from the Catholics of Stolatz; and, finally, that they were, and still are, associated with the bands of robbers which unhappily infest nearly all the districts on the left bank of the Narenta. These are facts too well known to be for a moment doubted, and they at once stamp the Christians of Gasko, with those of Piva, Zupzi, Drobniak, &c., as rebels, and as such, worthy of punishment. Their only excuse is, their utter ignorance of law, and of their duty as subjects. Their wrongs were certainly grievous, and redress appeared hopeless; this, coupled with the success which has attended the revolt of the neighbouring districts, appeared to justify their opposition to a Government which, instead of protecting and dispensing justice, protected and aided their oppressors. So far, these people were justified, perhaps, in seeking themselves a remedy for the evils which weighed them down, when the Government refused to do it for them: but, unhappily, from being the oppressed, a slight success has turned them into oppressors; and refusing all concessions, they desire, in common with the rest of the revolted districts, entire emancipation from the Turks; and all who do not join them to this extent, they look upon as enemies, and treat as such when occasion offers.

Twenty-one villages revolted on the re-occupation of Kristatz; they were offered pardon provided they returned to their homes; they did so, but their object was not to live quietly, but to be able to get in their crops: five, however, soon rebelled again, and, to terrify the rest of them, were made an example of.

Had the object of the Turks been merely to avenge the murder of thirteen military, or to show their hatred of the Christians, they would have maltreated the

first Christian village they came to, instead of proceeding seven miles through a difficult country to the borders of a district which has for two years defied their efforts.

It is also worthy of remark, as proving how thoroughly intimidated the Mussulmans of Gasko are, that I could not induce one to guide me through the country, though I offered to pay handsomely for the service. The Christians, with a few exceptions, can go about singly and unarmed, while parties of Mussulmans, even when numbering fifty individuals, run considerable risk; and in proof I may here state that a party numbering fifty individuals while passing from Kristatz to Gasko, about twenty days since, had ten of their number shot down.

On one point I hesitate to offer an opinion: were the five individuals who died at Berouchitzi killed in action or shot afterwards, as asserted by the people, by Ali Riza Pasha? I can only say that the Christians assert that the five men were executed in cold blood, while the Turks insist that they were killed in fight. As, however, the Christians have, in my opinion, proved themselves unworthy of credit, the Turks should have the benefit of the doubt.

Pop Bogdan and some of the delegates are detained at Mostar; the former is a dangerous character, and as one of the leaders of the revolt merits being made an example of. He is, however, protected by the Russian Consul of Mostar, by whom his liberation has been several times demanded; it is, however, to be hoped that the authorities will resist this demand, and let justice take its course.

The exact number of cattle and sheep taken from the three burnt villages cannot be ascertained. Dervish Pasha has, however, endeavoured to restore all that was taken, and upwards of 1000 head have been given back.

With regard to the chapels alleged to have been pillaged, I have to state that I personally visited them: I found them simple, small, but strongly built buildings; the largest I measured was about thirty-five feet long by twenty broad and twelve high. They are fire-proof, and evidently built for the double purpose of devotion and defence; their windows are loop-holes, and their entrances are low and small, and defended by oaken doors. The interior fittings I could judge of from what I saw of the chapel at Samabor, which had suffered little. In this chapel I found the sanctuary separated from the body of the church by a few boards covered with gaudy valueless prints; the candlesticks were of stone roughly cut, the altar of the same material, and everything else in keeping.

Three of these chapels are distant about two miles from the nearest habitation; that of Samabor is in the village.

At the time these chapels were pillaged the villages in their neighbourhood were deserted, the inhabitants having revolted and fled to the hills.

The chapel of Samabor was entered by the door, which bore marks of violence It had been despoiled of the priests' vestments, candles, lamps, chalices and a few other articles estimated by the priest altogether at 8,000 piastres.

The chapel of Dobrolich had been completely gutted, the altar and sanctuary cast down, and the scriptures and liturgy torn. This chapel had also been polluted by some person, traces of the act still being visible.

The chapel of Kazantzi was entered by one of the loop-holes, which was enlarged for the purpose; it was also completely gutted, and everything in it cast down. The loss to this chapel is estimated at 12,000 piastres.

The chapel of Gratchantzi was similarly treated.

No direct accusation is made as to the authors of these outrages; the Bashi-Bozouks are the supposed actors in three instances, and the Nizam in the fourth, but I could not get any Christian to swear to having been a witness in any of the instances. The authorities do not endeavour to shield any one; they deny all knowledge as to the perpetrators and express their willingness to punish the culprits when discovered. If, however, the troops or Bashi-Bozouks were the authors of these outrages, it seems strange they did not commit the same excesses on other chapels which were easier of access.

The only evidence brought forward that soldiers were concerned in these outrages was a small piece of braid belonging to some part of the vestment of a priest, the possession of which was traced to a serjeant. This man was arrested and interrogated: his statement was very simple; he had taken the braid and a few piastres in exchange for a pair of gaiters while at Metokhia; the braid he had offered openly for sale on his arrival at Mostar; no one would purchase it in that state; he had therefore melted it down and sold the silver it contained to the silversmith who had advised him to melt it.

The possession of this braid has been looked upon, I believe, by the Russian Consul as conclusive proof that the authors of the outrages were the troops, and this has already, probably, been strongly put forward to prove the culpability of Turkish authorities in screening culprits when Mussulmans.

Before, however, concluding without sufficient evidence that the troops, regular or irregular, committed these acts, it should be clearly shown, first, that they were not done by the rebel Christians themselves at the instigation of those who are supposed to be guiding the revolt, the object being to bring odium on the Turks by accusing them to Europe as the perpetrators. It appears strange that when the villages revolted and fled with their properties to the hills, the priests, who were their leaders, did not secure the church valuables by a similar process; secondly, supposing the chapels were really robbed, it has to be shown that the robberies were not the work of Uskoks, who, though Christians, are so only in name. The Uskoks plundered a chapel in the district of Nevessin four years ago; the argument, therefore, in their exculpation that they are too superstitious to commit sacrilege does not hold good.

(Signed) JAS. ZOHRAB.

Bosna Serai, November 2, 1860.

Inclosure 3 in No. 1.

Declaration (in Turkish) made by the Deputation from the Christians of Gasko, stating the cause and object of the Revolt.

Inclosure 4 in No. 1.

Letter (in Turkish) addressed by Nicola Pavitch to Dervish Pasha.

Inclosure 5 in No. 1.

The Secretary to Prince Nicolas of Montenegro to Dervish Pasha.

Cettigne, 20 *Septembre*, 1860.

M. le Général,

SON Altesse le Prince et Souverain du Montenégro a été informé que votre Excellence prépare une expedition contre Piva. Vous savez que les habitants du dit district pressés de près se sauveront dans le Montenégro, et qu'ils retourneront à leurs villages dès que le danger aura disparu, circonstance qui cause souvent des troubles et désordres.

Votre Excellence le saura combien mon Prince et maître Nicolas I tient à cœur le maintien de la paix sur la frontière; aussi a-t-il informé les habitants de Piva qu'ils ne peuvent espérer aucune assistance s'il ne soumettent pas à leur Souverain.

Je prie donc votre Excellence de bien vouloir renoncer à l'expédition projetée, qui pourrait troubler la paix sur la frontière.

Recevez, &c.

[Signature illegible.]

Le Secrétaire du Gouvernement.

Inclosure 6 in No. 1.

M. Hecquard to Dervish Pasha.

Scutari, le 1 *Octobre*, 1860.

M. le Général,

LE caloyer de Piva qui vient trouver l'an dernier votre Excellence me demande encore une lettre de recommandation pour elle, qu'il va intercéder pour ces diocésains.

Connaissant l'humanité de votre Excellence je lui remets ce mot de billet, quoique je suis persuadé d'avance que ma recommandation lui est inutile. D'après ce qu'il me dit, il vient vous prier d'accepter seulement l'impôt de cette

année et de remettre aux habitants de Piva, qui sont dans la plus grande misère, les impôts arrières. Je sais que cette concession dépasse vos pouvoirs, mais j'espère que votre Excellence voudra bien appeler la miséricorde de son Gouvernement sur ces malheureuses populations. En la faisant, votre Excellence fera une bonne action d'abord, et ensuite évitera une expédition qui dans les circonstances actuelles peut amener des complications. Votre Excellence comprendra que Piva étant une province Turque, la lettre que je lui adresse n'a aucun caractère officiel, et que le seul désir d'éviter une effusion de sang inutile et des embarras dans un moment où les frontières sont tranquilles a dicté cette démarche auprès de votre Excellence.

Veuillez, &c.

(Signé) A. HECQUARD.